

**Montana Emergency Operations Plan**

**Standard Operating Procedures & Guidelines**

**For**

**Montana Department of Natural Resources and  
Conservation**

**Fire & Aviation Management**

**January 2010**

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## Reference Manuals:

DNRC Fire Manuals  
Northern Rockies Mobilization Guide  
National Interagency Mobilization Guide  
Interagency Incident Business Management Handbook  
Local Government Disaster Information Manual – 1994  
Emergency Management Assistance Compact – 1999  
Northwest Wildfire Assistance Compact – 2004

## Purpose

The Department of Military Affairs (DMA) Disaster & Emergency Services (DES) is responsible for coordinating comprehensive emergency management within the State of Montana. To this end the DES has created the Emergency Coordination Plan, which defines the roles and responsibilities of agencies of State government in the event of a natural or man-caused disaster. Included in this plan is a “Responsibility Matrix”<sup>1</sup> which lists each government agency and allocates responsibility to perform certain functions during a disaster emergency.

Montana DNRC has been designated as the “lead” State-level agency with respect to fire, both wildland and structural. In addition, DNRC has been tasked with providing support to other agencies of government during a disaster with respect to:

- Financial Management
- Public Information
- Communications
- Damage Assessment
- Food Distribution
- Technical Assistance
- Continuity of Government
- Mitigation Assistance<sup>2</sup>

Procedures for wildfire emergencies are already well established and available through Forestry Division manuals, the Northern Rockies Mobilization Guide, the Interagency Incident Business Management Handbook, and a wide variety of other guides and manuals developed for wildfire suppression.

This document presents the procedures and guidelines under which the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation will operate when called upon to act in support of operations associated with a non-wildfire disaster response. This document supplements Annex K of the Montana Emergency Operations Plan of September 30, 1991 and complies with direction established by the NIMS (National Incident Management System).

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<sup>1</sup> *Montana Disaster and Emergency Plan*, Volume 1, Emergency Coordination Plan, Page 1

<sup>2</sup> *Montana Disaster and Emergency Plan*, Responsibility Matrix Definitions

## **National Incident Management System (NIMS) Compliance**

In a letter to the nation's governors, United States Department of Homeland Security Director Michael Chertoff stated that "the NIMS is our nation's incident management system, and recent events have taught us that full implementation of NIMS among all jurisdictions and all levels of government must be achieved as quickly as possible." Mr. Chertoff goes on to say that "Jurisdictions will be required to meet the FY 2006 NIMS implementation requirements as a condition of receiving federal preparedness funding assistance for FY 2007."

In a Homeland Security Memo dated August 16, 2006 and signed on October 16, 2006 the Director of Montana DMA - Disaster & Emergency Services, Dan McGowan, certifies that "Montana, in coordination with our tribal and local government entities, has successfully complied with the following 23 FY06 NIMS compliance requirements ('taken as a whole' as directed by the NIMS Integration Center and DHS' Homeland Security Grant Program." See Appendix 8.

Montana DNRC, Fire & Aviation Management Bureau, has worked with the Montana DMA – Disaster & Emergency Services to fully comply with the 23 FY06 NIMS requirements. It is important to recognize that the F&AMB is an operating member of the Northern Rockies Coordinating Group for wildfire management in Montana and the Northern Rockies. As such, the Montana DNRC operates under the "National Interagency Incident Management System," which establishes incident management standards for preparedness, training, resource management, communications and information management by wildfire protection agencies in the United States.

The DNRC has taken steps to offer training in IS-700 (Schedule #13) and IS-800 (Schedule #14) for 2008 and 2009. Further, DNRC has taken steps ensure compliance with all other relevant compliance schedule items.

## **Specific Authorities**

10-3 MCA – Disaster and Emergency Services

10-3-303 MCA – Declaration of Disaster – effect and termination

76-11-101 MCA – Protection of Natural Resources from Fire

76-13-105 – Protection of non-Forest Lands and Improvements

76-13-201- Duty of Owner to Protect Against Fire

76-13-202 – Means by which Department May Provide Protection

OSHA Fire Brigades Standard 29 CFR 1910.156

OSHA Hazardous Materials Responder Standard 29 CFR 1910-120

EPA Final Rule 40 CFR Part 311

PL 104-321 – EMAC, October 1996

Homeland Security Certification memo, August 16, 2006

## **Disaster/Emergency Declarations**

### **Instances Where Assistance Is Requested and Where No Disaster Is Declared**

Occasionally, a local authority may be faced with an emergency situation where State or Federal resources are requested and the nature of the emergency is such that the local authorities may not declare an emergency. Examples might include:

- Law enforcement events.
- Large-scale planned events exceeding the ability of local resources to manage.
- Short duration fires or other local emergencies.
- ...and others.

DNRC line officers, area or unit managers, or their designated representatives may authorize DNRC assistance. However, local civic authorities are under no obligation to reimburse expenses unless billing agreements are arranged in advance. Assistance provided will be funded by local DNRC budgets.

### **Local Emergency/Disaster Declaration**

A local government may declare a local emergency or disaster in response to an emergency incident. Although locally uncommon, at any given point in time circumstances may come together which result in a very damaging emergency event. In order to facilitate the mobilization of local resources county, city, or other civic authorities may declare an emergency to deal with the situation or its aftermath. The authorities issuing the declaration may or may not request the assistance of State or federal agencies. Instances where a Local Emergency/Disaster Declaration might be declared are:

- Localized flooding.
- Localized fire activity.
- Weather events (winter storms, tornado, etc.).
- Earthquakes.
- Hazardous materials spills.
- ... and others.

**DNRC Managers note:** Montana Operations Manual Management Memo 2-04-5<sup>3</sup>

“When the State of Montana responds to an event that does not warrant the Governor declaring a state of disaster or emergency, state agencies will have to bear the costs of the response from existing budgets.”

DNRC line officers; area or unit Managers, or their designated representatives may authorize DNRC assistance. However, local civic authorities are under no obligation to reimburse expenses

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<sup>3</sup> Montana Operations Manual, Management Memo 2-04-5, Dated 7/30/03, Subject: ACCOUNTING TRANSACTIONS REQUIRED TO REPORT EXPENDITURES RELATED TO DISASTERS OR EMERGENCIES.

unless billing agreements are arranged in advance. Assistance provided will be funded by local DNRC budgets.

### **Governor's Emergency/Disaster Declaration**

If an emergency event escalates beyond the ability of local authorities to manage the situation, the local county commissioners may request a "Governor's Emergency/Disaster Declaration". This is the most common declaration seen in Montana and is a "joint" effort between local government and the State of Montana Governor's Office. County commissioners make a request for a declaration via the Montana DMA – Disaster & Emergency Services.

Montana Indian tribes may also request a Governor's Emergency/Disaster Declaration and are not required to go through their local county commissioners. Tribes also have the option to request a disaster declaration directly with organizations of the federal government. Due to the unique treaty relationships between the tribes and the government of the United States, a Tribal Chairman/Counsel may request assistance directly to the secretary level of the various departments of federal government depending on the nature of the emergency.

Instances where a Governor's Emergency/Disaster declaration might be issued include:

- Large scale forest fire activity
- Large scale structure fires (maybe an oil refinery or other major industrial installation)
- Tornadoes
- Widespread flooding
- When dealing with the aftermath of a severe earthquake
- ...and others

DNRC line officers; area or unit managers, or their designated representatives may authorize initial DNRC assistance in the expectation that a Governor's Emergency/ Disaster Declaration will be issued. Authority to continue support operations must be obtained through the DNRC Director via appropriate division administrators. Deployment of fire suppression or support resources must be authorized by the DNRC Director via the Forestry Division Administrator. Statutory appropriations for overtime and travel must be requested and normally will be authorized. All other cost reimbursement arrangements must be agreed to in advance with the lead agency.

### **Presidential Emergency/Disaster Declaration**

If an emergency event escalates beyond the ability of State and local authorities to manage the situation, the State of Montana may request a Presidential Emergency/Disaster Declaration. As the name implies, this declaration is made by the President of the United States. Although, in any given year, it may be expected that a disaster requiring a Presidential declaration can occur somewhere in the United States, it would be far less common than a local or Governor's declaration. A Presidential Declaration is issued in response to very large scale disasters:

- Massive and very damaging earthquakes.
- Hurricanes.
- Massive flooding.

- Very large scale forest fire activity.
- When dealing with the aftermath of very large scale tornado activity.
- ... and others

DNRC line officers, area or unit managers, or their designated representatives may authorize initial DNRC assistance in the expectation that a Presidential Emergency/ Disaster Declaration will be issued. Authority to continue support operations must be obtained through the DNRC Director via appropriate division administrators. Deployment of fire suppression or support resources must be authorized by the DNRC Director via the Forestry Division Administrator. Statutory appropriations for overtime and travel must be requested and normally will be authorized. All other cost reimbursement arrangements must be agreed to in advance with the lead agency.

### **Other Federal Declarations**

In addition to the Presidential Declaration two other federal declarations may be issued:

- **Small Business Administration Declaration** – Issued to provide low interest loans through its physical and/or economic injury loan programs or through the economic dislocation program. These programs may be activated through the SBA, Secretary of Agriculture or by Presidential declaration.
- **Secretary of Agriculture (Drought) Declaration** – Issued in response to damage to crops due to a variety of causes. This most common form of the Secretarial declaration is with regards to drought. The Secretarial designation activates Farmer's Home Administration low interest loans to producers affected by the drought and normally activates other SBA assistance programs.

DNRC will normally not provide emergency assistance under these declarations.



## **Resource Mobilization**

Generally, two circumstances may be foreseen in which DNRC will act to manage or to support emergency operations. The first is during or in the immediate aftermath of a natural or human-caused emergency event where no disaster has yet been declared but there exists an immediate threat to lives and property. The other is in response to a local, Governor's, or Presidential Emergency/Disaster Declaration.

Support to non-emergency events or large scale planned events must be authorized in advance by the Director of DNRC. DNRC will normally not provide assistance where no emergency or disaster exists or is anticipated.

### **Immediate Threat to Lives and Property**

DNRC personnel may act in support of non-wildfire emergency operations in the event that an immediate threat exists to lives and property. If a DNRC responder witnesses an event involving an immediate threat or assistance is requested by an initial responder, the DNRC employee must evaluate the situation with respect to safety, personal capability, and resource capability.

First, and most importantly, the responder must decide if the response can be made with respect to his/her own personal safety and the safety of others in the vicinity.

Next, the responder must decide if he/she has the capability, usually gained through training and experience, to assist. A firefighter who cannot swim might not be the best person to directly assist in a water rescue. The person may, however, utilize the engine radio to call for assistance or use hose or other available tools to throw a lifeline.

Finally, the responder must decide if the engine or other resource at his/her disposal is adequate for the task. A Type 6 engine may be of little value suppressing fire at an oil refinery. Still, the engine radio again might be used to call for assistance or to order additional resources. The engine might also be effectively used to patrol the surrounding countryside for spot fires or to assist with area security.

At the earliest feasible time the DNRC responder must notify his/her supervisor of actions taken and obtain direction through the chain of command from a DNRC line officer<sup>4</sup> to continue assistance or to withdraw. Unless directed otherwise, once the immediate threat to lives and property has been mitigated, the DNRC responder must withdraw assistance.

Employee time will be charged against the organization's regular budget. Overtime, travel, and other expenses may or may not be authorized. Therefore, DNRC employees may issue a new SABHRS accounting code to accrue costs only if non-budgeted expenses are authorized.

Items to consider before committing DNRC resources to an incident where no emergency declaration has been issued:

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<sup>4</sup> Line Officer – DNRC Director, Area or Unit Manager, or appropriate Division Administrator

1. Should DNRC be involved? Is there an imminent threat to lives and property? Do we expect an Emergency/Disaster declaration?
2. Are equipment, supplies, or other resources available from the private sector? Locally available rental equipment or supplies might be obtained quickly and economically.
3. Does DNRC intend to bill for the use of equipment or personnel? Is the requesting agency aware of this intention?
4. Will personnel be operating in excess of 8 hours per day? Should overtime be required, a Governor's Emergency/Disaster Declaration must be in progress or other agreements made to authorize overtime. Resource orders and timekeeping paperwork must be used to document resource orders and hours expended.
5. Apart from very unusual or severe circumstances, the use of DNRC fire management resources should not interfere with the ability to accomplish their fire suppression mission.

### **Local Emergency/Disaster Declaration In Place or In Progress**

When conditions warrant, the DMA – Disaster & Emergency Services (DES) encourages local governments to issue a Local Emergency/Disaster Declaration. This facilitates the creation of an incident command organization and the issuance of additional mill levies to fund local emergency operations. DNRC support to local government during a local emergency may be warranted, but budget and operational elements must be considered in the same fashion as when no declaration is in place or intended.

### **Governor's or Presidential Emergency/Disaster Declaration In Place or In Progress**

DNRC assistance may be requested while a disaster request is in progress. The Governor is notified immediately by the responsible agency or by the DMA – Disaster & Emergency Services (DES) if a declaration will be requested. The executive office will affirm that a formal declaration will be issued. DNRC need not wait for the formal written declaration but may act once the DES obtains and passes on a verbal confirmation.

DES is the key agency in this process. Local authorities will normally work through their local DES representative who in turn is in contact with the State DES office in Helena. Once officials from DES have discussed the situation with the executive office, they will confirm that an emergency declaration will be forthcoming. This declaration authorizes other State of Montana government agencies to request general fund statutory appropriations for overtime and travel in support of the lead agency. If other costs will be incurred the DNRC and lead agency must formally agree in advance how they will be funded. The Northern Rockies Coordination Center will issue a SABHRS accounting center for use by DNRC personnel.

At this point in the process it is likely that DES will implement and staff their emergency operations center, EOC. All requests for assistance which cannot be met internally by the responsible agency or within their normal organizational contacts will be placed to the DES EOC. An example of this process might be the situation surrounding large scale wildfire activity. The DNRC may request an emergency declaration to the Governor's office via DES. Meanwhile, DNRC continues to work internally and with their normal interagency cooperators in wildfire suppression operations to manage the emergency situation. The Governor's Declaration will authorize DES to mobilize additional resources from the Montana National Guard or other agencies of State government.

All emergency requests for DNRC assistance from other agencies of State government are placed by DES to the Northern Rockies Coordination Center. The DNRC Direct Protection Coordinator or designated NRCC duty officer will contact DNRC managers, brief them on the emergency situation, and obtain authority to offer or decline support. Authority to mobilize wildfire suppression or support resources is delegated from the Director of DNRC to the Forestry Division Administrator, to the Chief of the Fire and Aviation Management Bureau, and to the F&AMB Suppression Section Supervisor (State Fire Coordinator). The notification process will begin with the Suppression Section Supervisor and move up through the chain of command. In the event that these DNRC officials cannot be reached, the Direct Protection Coordinator or authorized NRCC duty officer may offer or decline support based on the circumstances of the emergency situation. Once DNRC forestry or fire management officials have been contacted support will be continued or withdrawn.

DNRC fire suppression and support resources are mobilized through the geographic area interagency fire dispatch system. This system provides DNRC contacts to statewide fire suppression managers. The dispatch organization may also provide access to federal fire suppression and support resources, again depending on the situation and with approval through federal management channels.

Items to consider before committing DNRC resources to an incident where a disaster declaration has been issued:

1. Has the request been placed through the correct channels? If not route it there.
2. Has the response been authorized by DNRC officials?
3. Have the appropriate financial codes been assigned?
4. Should the request be placed and filled with local private sources?
5. Will federal agencies be involved? If so have they been notified and will their involvement be authorized?

## **DNRC Coordination / Management Contacts**

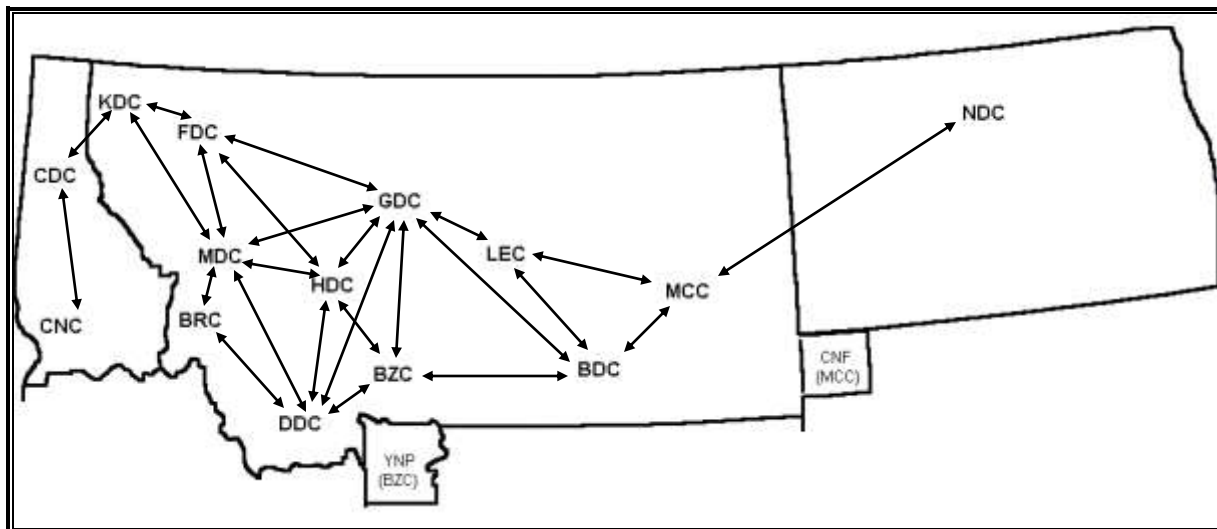
Ray Nelson - Direct Protection Coordinator	406-329-4880 Cell 406-544-3473 Duty Officer Cell 406-544-2632
John Monzie – F&AMB Suppression Supervisor State Fire Coordinator	406-542-4220 Cell 406-544-7383
Ted Mead – Chief, F&AMB	406-542-4304 Cell 406-544-1004
Bob Harrington – State Forester	406-542-4301 Cell 406-544-6045

## Dispatch/Coordination

Resource orders for non-fire emergencies originate with the “lead” organization as defined by the DES Responsibility Matrix. Requests which cannot be filled internally are placed to the DES EOC. DES, in turn, places the request to the organization best able to provide assistance. Non-fire suppression and support resources may be ordered directly from the organization willing to provide the resource. It is recommended that information regarding this assignment be documented on a resource order form, but other documentation may be satisfactory.

Montana DNRC Fire Suppression and support resources are mobilized via the interagency fire dispatch system. In Montana, Northern Idaho, and North Dakota the Northern Rockies Coordination Center (NRCC) is the hub of the system responsible to coordinate the movement of resources between the wildfire dispatch zones. Zone Dispatch Centers provide support to member wildfire organizations and in some cases to local initial attack dispatch centers. All state and federal wildfire suppression resources in Montana are mobilized through this system. The NRCC is also a member of and provides access to the National Wildfire Dispatch system and the National Incident Coordination Center (NICC) in Boise, Idaho. The wildfire dispatch system is designed to provide aviation, communications, transportation, lodging, meals, and other logistics support services to large-scale emergency operations.

In addition, Zone Dispatch Centers may request resources directly from their “neighbors.” This “good neighbor” policy allows for the rapid mobilization of “closest forces” resources. In the event that the scale of operations is such that Northern Rockies Coordinating Group (NRCG) members want closer coordination of inter-zone resource mobilization, the Multi-Agency Coordination representatives may override the neighborhood policy and require inter-zone ordering via the NRCC.



**Northern Rockies Geographic Area Neighborhood Map**

**BDC - Billings Dispatch Center – *Neighbors: BZC, GDC, LEC, MCC***  
(Billings, MT). Dispatches for CRA, FPA, NCA, RMA, BID, MSO, LBP, BLW, BFK

**BRC - Bitterroot Dispatch Center – *Neighbors: DDC, MDC***  
(Hamilton, MT). Dispatches for BRF

**BZC - Bozeman Dispatch Center – *Neighbors: BDC, DDC, GDC, HDC***  
(Bozeman, MT). Dispatches for GNF, CNF (BEARTOOTH RD), CES-BZN, YNP

**CDC - Coeur d’Alene Dispatch Center – *Neighbors: GVC, KDC***  
(Coeur d’ Alene, ID). Dispatches for IPF, IDL, CAS, KVS, MIS, PDS, PLS, SJS, CDT, COD, CDK

**GVC – Grangeville Dispatch Center – *Neighbors: CDC***  
(Grangeville, ID). Dispatches for CWF, NPF, CMS, CTS, CWS, MCS, NPT, CWD, NPP

**DDC - Dillon Dispatch Center – *Neighbors: BRC, BZC, GDC, HDC, MDC***  
(Dillon, MT). Dispatches for BDF, CES-DLN, BUD, DFD, RLR, BHP, GKP

**FDC - Flathead Dispatch Center – *Neighbors: GDC, KDC, MDC, HDC***  
(Kalispell, MT). Dispatches for FNF, GNP, NWS-SWN, NWS-KAL, NWS-STW

**GDC - Great Falls Dispatch Center – *Neighbors: BDC, BZC, DDC, FDC, HDC, LEC, MDC***  
(Great Falls, MT). Dispatches for LCF, CES-CON, BFA, FBA, RBA, BLR, GFW

**HDC - Helena Dispatch Center – *Neighbors: BZC, DDC, GDC, LEC, MDC, FDC***  
(Helena, MT). Dispatches for HNF, CES-HLN

**KDC – Kootenai Dispatch Center – *Neighbors: CDC, FDC, MDC***  
(Libby, MT). Dispatches for KNF, NWS-LIB

**LEC – Lewistown Dispatch Center – *Neighbors: BDC, GDC, HDC, MCC***  
(Lewistown, MT). Dispatches for LED, NES, BLR, BWR, CMR (West Side), MLR, GGW

**MCC – Miles City Dispatch Center – *Neighbors: BDC, BZC, LEC, NDC***  
(Miles City, MT). Dispatches for CNF, MCD, EAS, SOS, CMR (East Side)

**MDC - Missoula Dispatch Center – *Neighbors: BRC, DDC, FDC, GDC, HDC, KDC***  
(Missoula, MT). Dispatches for LNF, R01, WOF, INT, MTS, SWS, NWS-PLS, FHA, MFD, NBR, MSW, NRK

**NDC - North Dakota Dispatch Center – *Neighbors: MCC***  
(Upham, ND). Dispatches for DPF, NDS, DID, NDD, FBA, FTA, TMA, ADR, AWR, CLR, CRR, DLR, DVR, GDR, JCR, LIR, LLR, LWR, SHR, USR, VCR, VFR, FUP, IPP, KRP, TRP, SLT, BMW, GFW

Another wildfire dispatch channel exists within the Northern Rockies interagency dispatch system. The State of Montana is a member of the “Northwest Wildland Fire Compact”<sup>5</sup> which provides for direct resource ordering between member States and Canadian Provinces in support of wildfire activity. It can be foreseen that under unusual emergency circumstances offers of support will be forthcoming under the sponsorship of the Northwest Compact. All Northwest Compact ordering in support of DNRC operations is processed via the Northern Rockies Coordination Center.

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<sup>5</sup> Northwest Wildland Fire Protection Agreement (Northwest Compact), Cooperative Operating Plan Revised 2007

Montana is also a member of the “Emergency Management Assistance Compact – EMAC.”<sup>6</sup> This support system is managed by DES and ordering for EMAC resources will not necessarily be routed through the interagency wildfire dispatch system. Still, given the wildfire dispatch communications and logistics support infrastructure, it might be anticipated that the NRCC and Zone Dispatch Centers may participate in the ordering process. All EMAC ordering is coordinated via the NRCC and DES EOC.

Support to a non-wildfire emergency will likely not be mobilized initially within the structure provided by the wildfire dispatch system. Most law enforcement or structure fire organizations are dispatched via 911 Centers or by Local Police/Fire Dispatch. Other non-emergency services organizations may also possess communications/dispatch capabilities. Direct resource ordering of wildfire suppression and support resources between the organization managing the emergency situation and DNRC managers is authorized in the initial response phase of the emergency if approved by the local DNRC line officer. If DNRC resources are assigned and as the incident progresses the NRCC will be notified as early as feasible to establish an orderly and systematic flow of intelligence and resource ordering information. As soon as is practical, and as ordering activity, incident complexity, or duration increases, resource ordering for DNRC resources and coordination activities will be routed through the NRCC.

It is also probably fair to say that most non-wildfire dispatch organizations such as 911 are organized to support short-term events. Most structural fires or law enforcement actions are managed within a day or two incident period. These initial responder systems are designed for a rapid and effective incident response but generally are not as prepared for longer duration “campaign” operations such as those which occur with large scale wildfire activity.

Therefore, it may be assumed that the short duration non-wildfire event will be managed best using the local agency’s existing dispatch system with direct ordering to local DNRC managers as approved and coordinated via the DES. Longer duration events may be better managed either within the Incident Command System - Expanded Dispatch model<sup>7</sup> - or within the interagency wildfire dispatch system itself. In either case, it is likely that the wildfire dispatch system will be used for resource ordering, experienced personnel, or both.

## **Resource Ordering**

Two methods exist to process requests for emergency resources. The first uses the standard resource order form for aircraft, equipment, overhead (personnel), crews, and supplies. This form is widely used for resource orders within the Incident Command System (ICS), as implemented in support of wildfire operations, and is generic enough for use in non-wildfire emergency operations. If a request for resources is placed to DNRC from DES **to support another** government agency or a request is placed by DNRC to DES **for support from another** government agency, the request should be placed on the resource order form. It can be foreseen however, that an organization managing the incident may not be familiar with the resource order paperwork. In this instance, a request may be received by letter, form, or other written means. The DNRC organization providing the resource will transcribe this order/request to the standard

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<sup>6</sup> Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) Standard Operating Procedures for the State of Montana, Revised 7/22/99

<sup>7</sup> Incident Command System, Expanded Dispatch – National Interagency Mobilization Guide, NFES 2092 Revised March 2007, Chapter 33.1 Page 122

resource order form. This paperwork-based resource ordering/request process is the preferred method of ordering for small scale incidents.

The other process used for resource ordering is the computer and internet-based Resource Ordering and Status System (ROSS).<sup>8</sup> This system is used by all State and federal wildfire dispatch organizations in the United States when requesting resources from the national wildfire dispatch system. In Montana and the Northern Rockies, the ROSS system is deployed at the NRCC, all Zone Dispatch Centers, and all Indian Agencies. Initial attack dispatch organizations, if located separately from a Zone Dispatch Center, will likely not be using ROSS. An order placed by DES for DNRC wildfire suppression resources will arrive at the NRCC on the paper form. The NRCC may enter the order into ROSS and place it to the appropriate zone dispatch center or to NICC. This is the preferred method of resource ordering from the national wildfire dispatch system.

Should management of the incident expand, warranting the establishment of an expanded dispatch organization, and that expanded dispatch is working closely with the Zone Dispatch Center, it may be foreseen that the ROSS order will be initiated at the expanded dispatch center. The ROSS order will be processed through the wildfire dispatch system in the same manner as with any wildfire suppression order. This is the preferred method of resource ordering for very large scale incidents where extensive ordering is expected via the national dispatch system.

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<sup>8</sup> Resource Ordering and Status System, ROSS Website - <http://ross.nwcg.gov>

## Out-of-Area Support

Although large scale emergency incidents are rare in any given location, they are not that uncommon for the nation as a whole. 2006 and 2007 saw multiple large scale hurricanes in Florida and Louisiana. The Midwest (as well as other places in the United States) is susceptible to large scale flooding. California is prone to earthquakes and wildfires. Alaska and the Pacific Northwest experience violent volcanic activity. The unfortunate events of September 11, 2001 in New York City required a massive rescue, relief, and cleanup effort.

In almost any year the Intermountain West will see large scale wildfire activity. This activity makes wildfire suppression agencies uniquely prepared to assist during non-wildfire disasters. Wildfire managers, dispatchers, and firefighters frequently mobilize to support large scale emergencies and have many opportunities to exercise their operations and logistics support systems. Since non-wildfire incidents happen much less frequently, emergency managers often look to wildfire agencies to provide logistics support; experienced personnel, equipment, crews, supplies, and other resources.

DNRC is a member of the Northern Rockies Coordinating Group. As such, DNRC has made personnel and financial commitments to the wildfire management and dispatch system, to the deployment of suppression resources, and to the establishment and maintenance of incident management teams. In addition, DNRC can and does supply miscellaneous personnel and other support resources to wildfire cooperators. DNRC works closely with county and local fire managers through the State/County Cooperative Protection Program<sup>9</sup>. DNRC and other federal, state, and local members of the NRCG have committed to mutual aid and interagency wildfire operations within Montana and the Northern Rockies.

Should the demand for resources due to wildfire activity in Montana exceed the ability of the NRCG to provide them, member agencies may order from the national dispatch system. Suppression and support resources are obtained from local, state, and federal organizations throughout the United States. Similarly, if fire activity occurs in other parts of the country, members of the NRCG provide resources in support of out-of-area wildfire operations. This principle of national reciprocal assistance and support is well established and provides the foundation on which large scale wildfire incidents are managed in the United States.

DNRC is authorized to provide suppression and support resources in support of wildfire activity outside the State of Montana, provided the deployment of resources does not negatively impact the ability of DNRC to perform its own fire management responsibilities. These assignments provide a mutual benefit, with the ordering organization obtaining needed assistance and DNRC personnel receiving valuable suppression experience. It also follows that other states will reciprocate in support of DNRC wildfire activity.

This national assistance and support principle is not as well defined for non-wildfire incidents. Clearly, several federal agencies have a responsibility to support the states in the event of a disaster emergency. It is not as clear that the states have this same obligation to support federal organizations. State wildfire organizations fund resources for operations within their respective

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<sup>9</sup> State/County Cooperative Protection Program – DNRC 900 Manual, Fire Suppression Guidelines



jurisdiction and while willing to provide support for wildfire operations, they are less willing to provide resources for non-wildfire activities outside their jurisdiction and expertise.

DNRC allows the dispatch of suppression and support personnel to support out-of-area incidents if they are members of an incident management or area command team. DNRC may also allow the dispatch of other suppression and support personnel as miscellaneous overhead at the discretion of the employee's line officer or, in the case of staff personnel, their division administrator. Although the State is perhaps not obligated to provide such assistance, the employee will surely return home with invaluable experience and knowledge to better support the State of Montana if a non-wildfire disaster were to strike closer to home.

In order for a DNRC employee to respond out-of-area as either a member of an organized team or as miscellaneous overhead, two conditions must be met:

1. Incident operations in the affected area must be operating under a Presidential or State Emergency/Disaster declaration.
2. The United States Forest Service or other sponsoring federal agency must agree in writing to reimburse the State for the individual's services and provide a valid federal reimbursable billing code.

The above discussion assumes that the individual will be dispatched in their official capacity as a DNRC employee. Should an employee wish to utilize his/her annual leave, compensatory time, or authorized leave without pay, the person may be hired as a federal AD employee. Dispatched in this manner, the individual is hired in their capacity as a private citizen rather than in their capacity as a DNRC employee.

Out-of-area dispatch of DNRC wildfire suppression and support employees is not authorized for non-disaster/emergency events.

## **Incident Management**

DNRC is a member of the Northern Rockies Coordinating Group. Members of the NRCG include:

- Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation
- Idaho Department of Lands
- North Dakota State Forest Service
- United States Forest Service
- Department of the Interior – Bureau of Land Management
- Department of the Interior – Bureau of Indian Affairs
- Department of the Interior – National Park Service
- Department of the Interior – Fish and Wildlife Service
- Montana Department of Military Affairs - Disaster & Emergency Services
- Local Government – Currently Missoula County Sheriff's Department

Senior members of these organizations provide the leadership and direction for wildfire management in the Northern Rockies. Authority to mobilize resources is delegated from the NRCG to the Northern Rockies Interagency Wildfire Dispatch System. During periods of large scale activity the NRCG will form a Multi-Agency Coordinating Group (MAC), which provides additional oversight to interagency fire management and dispatch operations.

Wildfire suppression organizations in the Northern Rockies follow the “Closest Forces Concept” in initial attack operations. This will normally result in the agency with jurisdiction responding but does allow for a response by an agency outside their jurisdiction. Incident command is established by the initial responder. As the incident grows in size and complexity, incident command is transferred to more senior or experienced personnel. The organization in place to manage and support the incident also grows within the organizational structure of the Incident Command System. As scale and complexity continues to increase, pre-defined Type 2 and Type 1 incident command teams may be activated through the wildfire dispatch system. The Northern Rockies supports 7 teams:

- Two Type 1 Incident Management Teams dispatched via the NRCC.
- Two Type 2 Incident Management Teams dispatched via Grangeville Dispatch.
- One Type 2 Incident Management Team dispatched via Kalispell Dispatch.
- Two Type 2 Incident Management Teams dispatched via Billings Dispatch.

In addition, area command teams, buying teams, and other organized support teams can be made available. All orders for incident management teams and other interagency resources must be placed via the Northern Rockies Coordination Center and their use approved by the Northern Rockies Coordinating Group.

## DNRC/DES Coordination

An important component of emergency management in Montana is the interaction between the DMA – Disaster & Emergency Services and the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation. DES is the lead State agency coordinating non-wildfire emergency response in Montana. DNRC is the lead State agency for wildfire emergency management and the organization most frequently involved in large scale emergency operations. Therefore, an effective and reliable communications and coordination channel between DES and DNRC is essential.

Outside regular office hours, DES maintains a 24-hour duty officer. Similarly, DNRC maintains a duty officer in cooperation with other staff members at the Northern Rockies Coordination Center. The NRCC duty officer is authorized to initiate an emergency response for any member of the NRCCG. A complete contact list is provided in the Northern Rockies Mobilization Guide. The duty officer contacts are:

	Regular Hours	After Hours	
DES	406-841-3966	406-841-3911	
NRCC	406-329-4880	406-544-2632 406-544-3473	NRCC Direct Protection Coordinator Not monitored in the off-season

In addition, the NRCC maintains a call down list for use in emergencies if the duty officer cannot be reached. Any organization requiring a duty officer call down list for emergency management should contact the NRCC.

In addition to the Dispatch and Coordination channel of communication, various agency and emergency managers establish various forms of direct voice and email communication. This is an essential and important element of the emergency response allowing managers the avenue to discuss events and establish response and management strategies. This management channel might also be used in the initial stage of an incident to initiate a response.

Managers should remember however that an organized, systematic, and coordinated strategy is absolutely essential in response to emergency events. Especially in the early stages, large scale disasters are characterized by confusion and uncertainty. One of the primary goals in the response is to establish order out of chaos. Intelligence information, strategies, direct channel resource ordering, and other relevant communications must be shared with incident commanders, dispatchers, and logistics support personnel. Resource ordering, in particular, must be directed through established ordering channels to ensure an effective and coordinated response.